

Greetings! This is our inaugural newsletter, designed to provide valuable information and assistance. Our dedicated efforts are focused on assisting Home Educators, which involves liaising with Local Authorities, we aim to keep you informed about trending issues and share relevant information. If you are not directly involved in Home Education, we kindly ask you to ensure the EHE team receives this newsletter. Thank you!

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# Home Education

Official Newsletter From Educational Freedom

February 2024

Building relationships between LAs and Home Educators.

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## Who are Educational Freedom?

We are the UK's leading not for profit home education service offering free support and information.

Why are we different?

We do not charge home educators to access any of our services.

## SCHOOLS REFUSING TO DEREGISTER EHCP PUPILS

We need to address a pressing issue with Local Authorities nationwide. There has been a significant rise in mainstream schools declining to deregister students with EHCPs, insisting on an EHCP review before granting permission. It's important to note that this is not a legal requirement, permission is not a requirement nor is an EHCP review, and mainstream schools should promptly process the deregistration requests for all students.

We are aware that the government had proposed a delay on deregistering SEN children, however on the 29th August 2023, the government released a [consultation response](#) which states "deletion of names of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan, children in need plan (CiNP) or child protection plan (CPP). ..... the Government does not intend to proceed with including this proposal in the replacement for the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 at this time, to allow for further policy development " As the proposed changes were discriminatory,

Educational Freedom crowd-funded for legal opinion and would have pursued the matter if the Government had implemented the changes.

We urge you to promptly notify all schools in your area that deregistration should be carried out without delay, irrespective of whether the child has an EHCP.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT LANGUAGE.

Upon initial consideration, one might assume that the terminology employed by the EHE team or home educators holds little significance. However, let's consider the broader perspective. In reading this newsletter, we encourage you to reconsider and reflect upon your own choice of language.

We provide assistance to families across the UK, offering one-to-one support to approximately 100,000 families in just over a decade, with over 5 million individuals accessing our website during that period. The challenges faced by these families have evolved over the years, and in recent times, many concerns have arisen from the use of language. Read on to explore some of these issues...

## THE PROBLEMS LANGUAGE CAN CAUSE.

Let's briefly consider a scenario where we've just deregistered our child to home educate. In the midst of feeling stressed, overwhelmed, scared, and perhaps even traumatised, we receive an official-looking email or letter. It references various laws, warns of potential consequences if we don't comply, and is signed by a home schooling teacher or welfare officer. Included is a form discussing timetables and lesson plans, leaving us confused as we didn't envision home education resembling

## HOME EDUCATION VERSUS HOME SCHOOLING.

**Home schooling** - the child is registered at school but doesn't attend, the LA and school are responsible for providing the education at home.

traditional schooling. Seeking information proves challenging; the council website is not very informative, and the letter implies we can't approach the council for support.

Now, envision an alternative, which fortunately aligns with the approach taken by some. A friendly and welcoming email or letter arrives a few days post-deregistration. It introduces the EHE team, acknowledges their legal duty to identify children missing education without excessive legal quotes, and emphasises their availability for support should it be required. The letter provides links to organisations like [Educational Freedom](#) and suggests that the family take a few months to settle in before the LA would like some provision and resource details.

The latter approach, with its considerate language, establishes a respectful relationship, preventing confusion for both parties involved.

## LEGAL JARGON

It's important to acknowledge that not everyone may fully grasp the legal intricacies included in communications from Local Authorities. While there's no suggestion of diluting the content, it would be beneficial to consider the tone and presentation of these letters. When they come across as overly zealous and threatening, it automatically instils wariness among home educators, affecting their comfort in responding.

Balancing the communication to be clear, informative, and respectful can go a long way in fostering a positive relationship between home educators and LAs. The goal should be to empower and inform, rather than inadvertently creating an adversarial atmosphere.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**Home education** - the child is not registered at school and the parent is responsible for providing the education.

Confusing the two terms leads to many problems, schools refuse to deregister as they believe they will remain responsible for the provision.

LAs believe the family are creating school at home and then deem the education unsuitable as school is not being recreated.

Families believe they must create school at home and are not given information to the contrary.

While individuals may not always have control over their job titles, it is crucial to address the misconceptions that can arise from poorly chosen ones. The term "home school monitoring teacher" can be discouraging from the outset, as it implies the expectation of replicating a traditional school environment at home. This label may suggest responsibilities like marking and assessing work, creating an unnecessary barrier.

On the contrary, the title "Home Education officer" is more welcoming and transparent. It conveys a role that differs from the intrusive and rigid expectations of replicating a school setting, one that respects home education. Choosing job titles that accurately reflect the nature of the role can significantly impact how individuals perceive their responsibilities and the support they can expect.

Your title is one of the first things a home educator might notice, it sets the stage, do you want the family to work with you to both fulfil your legal duties? Or do you want them to be concerned that you will have ultra vires expectations?

Below are just some (31) of the different job titles our members told us their EHE person uses:

Home School Teacher  
EWO - Education Welfare Officer  
Inclusion Lead  
EHE Advisor  
EHE Officer  
EHE Advisory Teacher  
Support Officer for EHE  
Access and Inclusion Officer  
Home Education Inclusion Officer  
Principal Teacher  
Education Officer  
EHE Consultant  
EHE Visitor  
Education Officer for exclusions/CME/EHE  
EHE Support Teacher  
Education Safeguarding Assistant  
School Attendance Support Officer  
EHE, Child Employment, Performance Lead, Education Welfare Service  
for Children and Young People  
EHE Support and Advice Officer

EHE and Medical Tuition Manager  
Advisory Teacher EHE and GRT  
Senior Professional Practitioner for EHE  
EHE Team  
Home Education Family Support Worker  
Pupil Tracking and Licensing Manager  
EHE Coordinator  
EHE Engagement Officer  
Home School Link Worker  
Business Services Assistant  
EHE and School Attendance Support Officer  
Customer Liaison Officer Education Sufficiency and Access

## **ENGLISH OR LITERACY?**

## **MATHS OR NUMERACY?**

EHE guidance refers to numeracy and literacy rather than maths and English.

Maths is the broader academic discipline that encompasses various branches of abstract study, while numeracy specifically focuses on the practical application of mathematical skills in real-world situations. Numeracy is essential for individuals to navigate and engage effectively in everyday tasks that involve numerical information and calculations.

Literacy is a broader concept that pertains to the ability to read and write in any language, while English specifically refers to the language itself and the skills needed for communication in English. Literacy can exist in various languages, including English, but English proficiency involves a specific set of language skills within the context of the English language.

English is not always appropriate for someone with SEN, uses BSL or plans on moving abroad for example.

## **FORMS OR REPORTS?**

## **PROVISION AND**

Forms received from various LAs vary in quality, with a majority adopting school-centric terminology. Many request plans, timetables, schedules, and lesson information, terminology that may perplex home educators. This language creates confusion rather than clarity.

When recently questioned by an EHE advisor about our insistence on home educators not completing these forms, we clarified that such documents often seek information in a manner challenging for home educators to address. Some forms request irrelevant details like the names and addresses of all adults involved in the child's education, which, for some, could be numerous. How does an unschooler respond to a request for a timetable without fearing that the LA only acknowledges a school-at-home style of home education?

In recent months, an uptick in information requests post form submission has been noted due to unclear or omitted questions. This not only adds unnecessary work for both parties but also hinders the communication process. Instead of completing these forms, we advocate for home educators to follow our guide on providing a resource and provision report. This guide has proven effective, encouraging the inclusion of all pertinent information necessary to determine whether the child is adequately home educated or potentially missing education. In contrast to other guides, ours does not provide a template for direct replication; instead, we encourage home educators to thoroughly personalise their responses. Our service stands out for not imposing charges on home educators, in contrast to some home education charities. It remains inclusive to all, and we refrain from 'checking reports' to avoid the possibility of inaccurately representing a family's educational provision.

# RESOURCE REPORT WRITING GUIDE

Providing home educators with a link to the [Educational Freedom provision and resource report writing guide](#) can help you and home educators.

The guide encourages families to provide information so you can understand how the education is full-time, suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and SEN, as well as how literacy and numeracy are covered. It also explains how to describe progress.

# PROVIDING INFORMATION

Feel free to share our guide to assist home educators in writing their initial or update provision and resource reports; it's accessible [HERE](#) and is regularly updated to align with current legislation.

We want to respectfully remind you that, while informal enquiries to fulfil the duty of identifying children missing education are acceptable, there is no legal foundation for expecting extensive information from home educators. A concise 1 to 2-page report, especially when following our guide, should suffice.

Throughout the guide and our website, you may come across some negative references about LAs and advice on how to protect oneself. Unfortunately, due to the presence of LAs that act beyond their legal authority, we adopt a standard, one-size-fits-all approach. We remain hopeful that, over time, all LAs will operate in the best interests of home educators.

If you have the opportunity to reassess your title, the wording of letters, your website, to include a link to our service etc it would go a long way to rebuilding some of the bridges burned by badly behaved LAs. We would welcome you reaching out to us if you would like our support in making these changes.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter, if you have any feedback or wish to discuss/clarify something, we invite you to email us at [support@educationalfreedom.org.uk](mailto:support@educationalfreedom.org.uk)

**[www.educationalfreedom.org.uk](http://www.educationalfreedom.org.uk)**

**Educational Freedom**

Whilst we have to give you the option to unsubscribe, we really hope that you don't. We promise not to spam you, instead we will keep you updated on any trends or important information we think you should know about.

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